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To: Finance and Claims Committee

From: Claudia Clifford, AARP Montana Advocacy Director

Re: Recommendation to increase services in the Medicaid Waiver Home and Community Based Services for seniors and people with physical disabilities

The Senior and Long Term Care budget in HB 2 proposes funding the Medicaid Waiver home and community-based services (HCBS) for seniors and people with physical disabilities at the current level of services and number of people served. In other words, this budget does not provide for the growing number of people who would like to receive services in their homes instead of going to a nursing home. In addition, it does not address capacity needs of the **357 people on the waiting list** for these services.

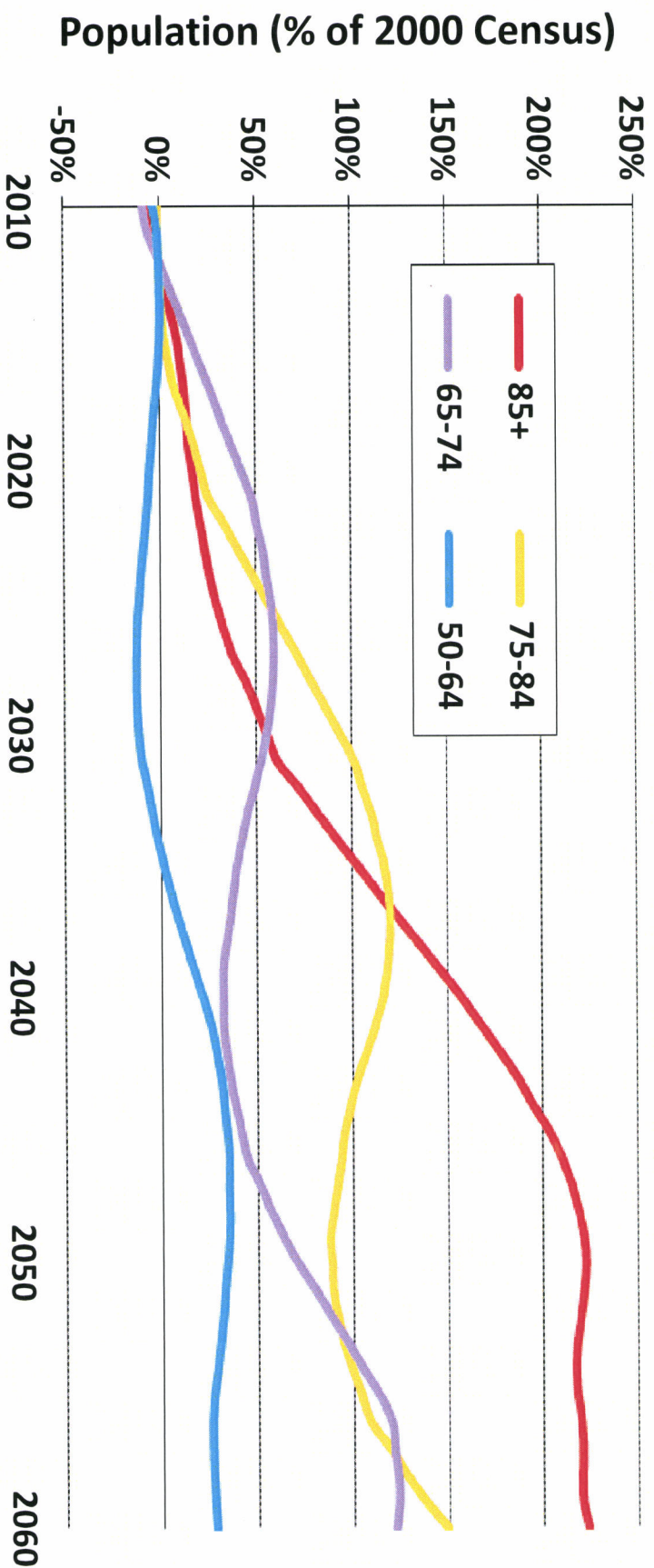
The "Silver Tsunami" of our state will place more demands on services that serve our elders. We strongly recommend that the legislature continue to look for ways to help seniors stay in their homes and communities, and avoid high cost long-term care in nursing homes.

AARP recommends that the legislature fund an additional 100 slots for Medicaid waiver home and community based services (HCBS) for seniors and physically disabled, 50 slots in FY 16 and an additional 50 slots in FY 17. Given a current waiting list of 381 individuals for these Medicaid waiver HCBS services, an increase in services is warranted. Our state's "Silver Tsunami" necessitates growing the Medicaid waiver program over time. The people who qualify for waiver services need nursing home level of care so at any moment they could go into a nursing home where costs to the state are significantly higher.

During 2013 and 2014, this very important waiver program experienced tight budgets and restrictions in slots, primarily services to people in assisted living (AL). Our office received calls from distraught family caretakers who were facing the choice of moving a parent from assisted living to a nursing home because waiver services were not available to keep the parent in the assisted living facility where they preferred. While AARP strongly supports restoring the AL slots, that could also happen through a general increase in total funding for more slots. The outcry you heard in this last year demonstrates the need to grow this program. We encourage the committee to fund 100 additional slots for the Medicaid waiver program in SLTCD.

Real Possibilities

Projected Growth of the Older Population in Montana as a Percentage of 2012 Population, by Age Group, 2010-2060



Age Group	Year	Year	% of 2012 population*	% Increase in population relative to 2012**
Age 85+	2012	2060	3.23	223%
Age 75-84	22,715	73,483	2.50	150%
Age 65-74	47,111	117,668	2.23	123%
Age 50-64	84,550	188,189	1.28	28%
	216,827	278,585		

* Calculation: (yr 2060 pop / yr 2012 pop)

** Calculation: (yr 2060 pop - yr 2012 pop) / yr 2012 pop